

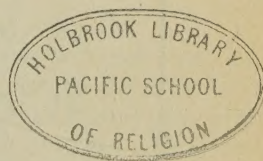
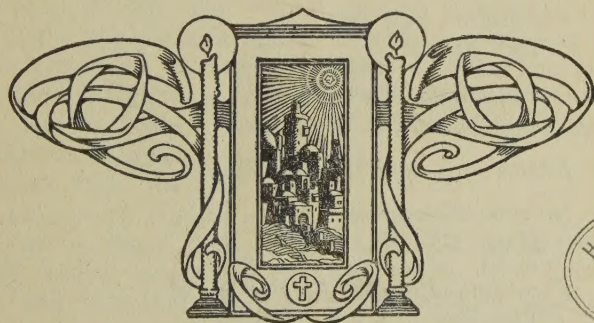
The MINISTER'S QUARTERLY

Continuing The Seminar Quarterly

VOLUME II : No. 2

MAY, 1946

*Issued in the Interest of
Christian Worship and Preaching*



Gaius Glenn Atkins, D.D., L.H.D.

Editor

Published quarterly by

THE COMMISSION ON EVANGELISM AND DEVOTIONAL LIFE
and THE DEPARTMENT OF THE MINISTRY
of the Congregational Christian Churches
287 Fourth Avenue New York 10, N. Y.

SINGLE COPIES 15 CENTS. ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION 50 CENTS per year

Entered as second-class matter March 2, 1945, at the Post Office
at New York, N. Y., under Act of March 3, 1879

THE MINISTER'S QUARTERLY

Contents Vol. II, No. 2

	PAGE
I. <i>The Theological Revival and Preaching</i>	3
THE REV. JOHN C. BENNETT, D.D.	
II. <i>The Inaugural Address</i>	7
RONALD BRIDGES, A.M., Litt.D., L.H.D.	
III. <i>A Layman Looks at the Church</i>	10
RALPH E. FLANDERS	
IV. <i>Kingdom Building in Rural America</i>	15
THE REV. ROBERT BRUCE, D.D.	
V. <i>Evangelism and Our Modern Temper</i>	18
VI. <i>A Litany of Thanksgiving, Penitence and Dedication for the People and the Minister of the Church</i>	19
VII. <i>The Editor Fills In</i>	21
THE EDITOR	
VIII. <i>Our Reading Fellowship</i>	23
THE REV. MAX WEBSTER	
IX. <i>Report of Roundtable Discussion</i>	24
X. <i>Inspirer—Schweitzer</i>	27
MARK G. INGRAHAM	
XI. <i>Preaching—Plus the Printed Page</i>	28
THE REV. JOHN R. SCOTFORD	
XII. <i>Books, Men and Fishing</i>	31
THE REV. FREDERICK H. THOMPSON	
XIII. <i>Pastoral Epistle</i>	32
HORACE F. HOLTON	

All rights reserved

The Commission on Evangelism and Devotional Life is not responsible for opinions expressed in these pages nor is the Editor responsible for the views of contributors.

All communications relating to subscriptions should be addressed to the office of the Commission, 287 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

All contributions (typewritten where possible) should be addressed to the Editor: Dr. G. G. Atkins, with stamped envelope for return in case of non-acceptance. Till further notice address all communications to Editor, c/o Commission office.

The Theological Revival and Preaching

The Rev. John C. Bennett, D.D.

Union Theological Seminary

A PREACHER must preach from theology if there is to be substance to his preaching. He may not make theological doctrines the subjects of his sermons, though there are times for that but he cannot help being guided by a theological point of view. The question needs to be raised: what difference should the present revival of theology make to preaching?

It should be understood that what I call a revival of theology is far from being the development in American Protestantism of a new orthodoxy. It is sometimes convenient to use such a term as "Neo-orthodoxy" but it should be regarded as referring to a very broad trend that includes a great variety of theological opinions. There is a revolt against the conclusions of liberal theology that were fashionable in Congregationalism in 1920. There is a new interest in theology as contrasted with the Philosophy of Religion. When I was a student in the Seminary it was clear that students looked to other disciplines than theology for their normative ideas—such disciplines as the Philosophy of Religion, Religious Education (which seemed to generate its own theology) and Christian Ethics. There is now a marked change in many seminaries and this change is also reflected in the American Church to some extent.

The developments in America have been very mild in comparison with those in Europe. On the Continent the war and the resistance seem to have strengthened greatly the hold of Karl Barth on Protestantism, but it is a Barth who believes in political action by Christians in the world rather than the more quietistic Barth of an earlier day. Brunner who is more easily understood and appreciated here than Barth in Europe is over-

shadowed. There has also been a much more pronounced development in Britain than among us. British Congregationalists have rediscovered P. T. Forsyth whom they regard as a great theologian, who was a generation ahead of his contemporaries, a Barth (though characterized by English moderation) before Barth. There is now a most interesting theological revival among English Congregationalists that should be better known to us.

The main characteristics of the new theological trend are these: (1) a new emphasis upon the Bible as the medium of revelation; (2) the acceptance of the truth in the classical Christian doctrines of sin and forgiveness; (3) the belief in the Church as an ecumenical community. Each of these represents an interest and an emphasis but not a crystallized doctrine. I shall try to indicate some of the effects that each of these characteristics of the new trend should have on preaching.

I

1. Biblical preaching will come into its own again. It will not be primarily the use of texts as sources of allegories with which to decorate the preacher's ideas but rather the attempt to present to the people the insights that the preacher finds in the Bible. It is interesting to note that in recent years among Biblical scholars there has been a revival of what used to be called "Biblical Theology."¹ This presupposes that there are strands of unity in the Bible that should be emphasized along with the variations to which we have become accustomed as a result of critical study. Of course, we will continue to

¹For the revival of Biblical Theology among the critics see *The Journal of Bible and Religion* (February, 1946) which contains an important symposium on the subject.

choose the parts of the Bible to be emphasized. But the process of exposing our minds to the Bible as a whole will alter the spirit with which we make our selection and gradually whole sections of the Bible that used to mean little will yield unexpected illumination. It would be a major disaster if one went through life with prejudices about what was important in the Bible acquired in the theological seminary! One thing that I have learned from the theologians rather than from the critics (though now they are often supported by the critics) is that there is a characteristically Biblical view of the world, of God's relation to man and to history which is at least in sharp contrast with most other philosophical and religious positions. I know that the theologians often oversimplify the Biblical materials at this point but they have had great influence in restoring the emphasis upon Biblical theology among the Biblical scholars. It is interesting to find such contemporary philosophers as John Macmurray and Charles Hartshorne turning to the Biblical conception of God² as more adequate than ideas of the absolute self-sufficiency of the divine being that have so generally attracted philosophically minded theologians in the past.

The Bible for the preacher is not a cramping authority but a source of liberation. It liberates him from the present, from the pressure of the newspapers and of contemporary fashions of thought which are often more tyrannical spiritual authorities than the Pope. It also liberates him from the one-sidedness of theologians. In the Gospels one finds an elemental wisdom that is not the substitute for theological thinking but rather the touchstone for theological thinking. The Bible also liberates the preacher from the theologian who tries to put truth into too simple a formula. As an example con-

sider these words: "For by grace you have been saved through faith" (Eph. 2:8) and "Faith working through love" (Gal. 5:6). Do they not combine in the right order what is most important for the Christian life? Paul stresses here the importance of realizing that all that is good in us is a gift of God. "By the grace of God I am what I am." We must understand this dependence on grace "lest any man should boast." This warning against self-righteousness is entirely sound but Karl Barth takes this warning and makes a whole system of theology out of it and as a result there is distortion.³ Man must participate through faith. And faith must work through love. If these three facets of the Christian life are kept together the result is sound but it is very difficult for any theologian to see all three together and to avoid the sacrifice of one of them to another.

The central reason for Biblical preaching is that, if Christianity is true, the Bible is our only source for knowledge of the events through which God speaks to men, through which God acts for our redemption. I emphasize decisiveness and centrality, not exclusiveness. It is not necessary to make negative judgments and to say that God is revealed nowhere else. From this point of view the unity of the Bible is Jesus Christ, but it is important to see Jesus Christ against the background of the Old Testament and to include the rich revelation of God there. It is also important to do full justice to the Jesus known to us through the Synoptic Gospels and to the whole impact of his life, death and victory over death upon the early Church that we find in the epistles and other New Testament writings. Here again theologians are in danger of dividing what God has joined. Biblical preaching will try to convey to the congregation the meaning of this total movement of life of which Jesus Christ is the center.

²See especially John Macmurray: *The Clue to History*; Charles Hartshorne: *Man's Vision of God*. A most interesting suggestion of the same idea is contained in an article by Robert Fitch in *The Journal of Religion* (January, 1943) on "John Dewey and Jahweh."

³The best brief statement of this aspect of Barth's thought is a little book entitled *The Christian Life* (S. C. M. Press, London). See especially pp. 58-60.

I am not here suggesting that there is any one theological interpretation of the significance of Christ that must control this preaching. The new theological revival has turned up some interpretations that are to me incredible. I refer, for example, to the reappearance of the idea that Christ was Man but not an individual man in the writings of at least two English Congregationalists.⁴ But Christian preaching should be dominated by the faith that in Christ God acted decisively to reveal himself and to redeem men. Let us start there and then be restrained in our theological elaborations.

II

2. The most widely discussed aspect of the new trend in theology is the return to the emphasis upon the depth, universality and persistence of sin. It should be clear enough to any one that the idealizations of human nature that were so commonly accepted a decade or two ago are no longer credible. Also the simple faith that science, education and reform or revolution would solve the human problem has proved to be one more superstition. Our generation has looked into the depths of evil both in the form of suffering and in the form of depravity. Now, something else has happened; we have learned as a result of the Atomic bomb that the best we achieve in history is insecure. The Christian believes that all men were made for worship of and obedience to God. There is no place for cynicism but we know how easily we are self-deceived and how often our most creative gifts are used to frustrate our true nature. The preacher has available excellent books about the doctrine of man, books of diagnosis that should at least form the background of many sermons. There is much in this recent literature that will have to be worked over by the

preacher and presented in quite a different form.⁵ I doubt if it would be wise to preach about "the myth of the Fall"! Both the words "myth" and "Fall" would be misunderstood by any congregation. This idea of the Fall expresses the important truth that sin is the second and not the first fact about human nature, that sin is contrary to man's real nature and so it is a relatively hopeful doctrine. The whole series of ideas connected with the Fall and sin seems to me to lead to two practical emphases of major importance for preaching.

When we speak of the universality of sin, first of all, we express the conviction that no one of us should make an exception of himself but that each of us should begin with the mote in his own eye. There would be few conflicts that lead to a stalemate between individuals or between nations if we could form the habit of beginning with our own sins rather than with those of our opponents. This does not mean that we should whitewash others, but that this is the right order because it is the order that takes account of our temptation to find in others the explanation of our own failures and to make others scapegoats for the common sin.

III

The other practical teaching that should come out of this type of theological interpretation is that there is no level of human growth or achievement that is not morally vulnerable, that does not have its own special temptations. The higher levels of human development are the most dangerous. The failure of the people who have had some reason to count themselves righteous or redeemed to guard against the temptation to identify their interests with their spiritual claims is written over the history of the Church. The applications of these two suggestions to personal life, to Church life and to the behavior

⁴See N. Micklem: *What Is the Faith?*, p. 160, and Daniel Jenkins: *The Nature of Catholicity*, pp. 62-63. The latter book is a good reference for the revival of theology in English Congregationalism connected with both Forsyth and Barth.

⁵I refer to such books as Reinhold Niebuhr's *The Nature and Destiny of Man* and Emil Brunner's *Man in Revolt*.

of classes and nations are endless. Preaching that doesn't prepare congregations to criticize themselves at these points is both a religious and a moral failure. Half of the Christian illumination concerning social problems can be found through the working out of these insights. Radical social criticism in these terms is always necessary, the kind of social criticism that will enable each Christian to see through the self-deceptions and the pretensions of his own group.

3. The discovery of the depth of the human problem has led to a new emphasis upon the gospel of the divine mercy as well as upon the imperative of the divine righteousness. Both must be kept together. It is not enough to exhort and exhort men, leaving them with sensitive consciences to face the moral frustrations that now are so common even when they do their best. They need to know that there is forgiveness in the gospel and not merely these moral exhortations. If they do not know this the temptation will be overwhelming to make what they do appear better than it is and so one easily starts on the road that leads to self-righteous defense. The end of this road is conflict and cruelty toward opponents. This is just as true in the family as it is in the U.N.O.

Moral demand and forgiveness—these sometimes seem opposed, but where we do not have both, the moral demand is in danger of leading to a cold and loveless struggle to appear to oneself better than one is or the forgiveness is in danger of providing an excuse for a moral holiday. To preach in such a way as to keep them together is to help to save society and the soul from the most destructive conflicts.

4. The experience that many of us have had of the ecumenical Church and the perception of the place of the Church in the Christian life form backgrounds for preaching, not only for sermons devoted to the Church but for preaching on most

themes. Always in the mind of the preacher should be the realization that he is not a lonely voice giving expression to good ideas that have come to him as an individual thinker. Always he should see himself as a part of a great community of faith and love. He may be a Congregationalist in his view of the autonomy of the local Church so far as the governing of its own affairs is concerned. But this should be combined with the realization that he represents the larger Church to the local Church and the Church of the centuries to the contemporary Church. This function of the ministry is not the result of ordination but it happens that ordination has been in most cases the public way of recognizing training for and appointment to the office that makes possible an intensive exercise of this function. I say this to indicate that my emphasis here has nothing to do with a sacerdotal conception of the ministry.

The minister as the one who represents the larger Church to the local Church has an educational responsibility to overcome provincialism, to keep before his people the dependence of the local Church upon the larger body of Christians, to enrich their minds with ideas and interpretations that correct the one-sidedness of any group of people who live in 1946, who are Americans, who are Congregationalists.

One of the consequences of this emphasis will be that the minister will show that ideas about the Church that lead to the isolation of the local Church or that create satisfaction with the denominational system are false. There will be conflicts of opinion about what the institutional structure of the Church should be but one thing is clear: the local congregation is Christian in virtue of what has come to it and of what continues to come to it from the larger Church. It is the business of the preacher to make sure that his people see this truth.

The Inaugural Address

of

Ronald Bridges, A.M., Litt.D., L.H.D.

The Fifth President of the Pacific School of Religion. Delivered at the First Congregational Church of Berkeley, February 18, 1946.

THIS is a time when each of us must show his credentials, must prove that he belongs to the human race. We must prove it by living as sons of God, by making life better and more grateful for all the Children of God. It has been the unaccountable fortune of people like us here to be on the executive committee of the human race, and we have done well by ourselves. Lately this committee assignment has been threatened and our very membership subject to question. It is an experience that has left us shaken.

We find ourselves standing on the rim of an abyss giddy with the awareness of eternity opened up before us in the fission of a nucleus. In our own day, within a few hours, we have seen the legend of Prometheus the Titan re-enacted—this time with no mythological *dramatis personae*, but with our friends among the characters. There are Titans today—of science—and like their archetype who first grasped the secret of fire, they are suffering the agonies of the damned.

I never understood the story of Prometheus until the great bomb fell. The moral of the legend escaped me utterly. It seemed to me that a fire-giver was so obviously a benefactor that the punishment meted him was outright barbarism by which the gods themselves stood convicted. Now I see it differently. Man was not supposed to have fire until he was ready for it, until he had grown in moral stature high enough to use fire as it should be used. Prometheus plucked the secret from the unknown too soon; and man, still cunning and suspicious, turned villages before he learned to cook his food and tempered the sword long before he wrought the plow.

Who commissioned this twentieth-cen-

tury Titan whose success has made man afraid as he has never been afraid before? The mothers and fathers of this land and of all civilized lands who closed their ears to the voice of the prophets and in whose homes the words of thanksgiving and humble petition were no more heard. The elders and teachers and preachers of little faith who allowed one generation after another to turn to the God of Success and at last, turning to the God, themselves, joined the rout and called it progress. The military and the scientists, the politicians and the diplomats have done an awful thing to their fellow men. But we commissioned them to do it; and we applauded, too, until at last we saw how terribly they had done.

Somewhere in the Oak Ridge Project there were, perhaps, John Wesleys and Alexander Campbells who were diverted to the task because their mothers and fathers took a short view of religion and a long view of electricity. Somewhere in the Manhattan Project a Walter Rauschenbusch or a William Temple may have spent his talent when he could have been showing us, better than we can now see it, our duty to the wretched people of the earth—or a Washington Gladden who might have taught us to sing afresh,

O, Master let me walk with thee
In lowly paths of service free.

There is more to this than idle speculation. Men of one talent are scarce. Born in season they are tremendous, but coming out of their time they are misfitted eccentrics. Men with an early and compelling sense of vocation are rare, too. Most people have multiple talents and develop that one most favored by the climate of opinion, most readily and richly re-

warded by their fellowmen. In this respect Leonardo Da Vinci was the ordinary man raised to the nth power of genius. He did many things well and could have done more; but the climate of his time made him first of all an artist.

The climate of our century has favored the business man and the scientist and has been unfavorable to the teacher and the preacher. A change of climate would not only attract able men otherwise unheeding of these vocations but it would strengthen and prosper the abilities of those already serving in classroom and pulpit. By the honor accorded their pursuits, both would proceed with confidence, vigor, and a sense of great purpose difficult to maintain in our generation.

Such a change in climate seems to be taking place. Whether cause or effect I cannot tell, but the change is evident in the deepened conviction I find among the ministry, a rededication of laymen, and a general reconversion by you and me and millions of people like us. A new prestige is coming to men of good will; a new esteem is gathering for those whose lives are consecrated to the work of peace on earth.

"The problem of the future is a theological one" said the General. And that is no forlorn harbinger of spring. Other men have been saying it in other words, before he said it and since. Ten years ago such an utterance would have been met with perplexity. Twenty years ago it would have been hooted at. Today men hear such things and nod with uncertain but growing approbation.

In a grieving world penitently seeking to redeem itself the theological school is the place for the beginning of a renaissance. It is a strategic center, somewhat as the stock exchange has been strategic in the world of business and the laboratory in a scientific age. I feel deeply stirred to be in such a place at such a time.

It is no careless disregard of the short-ages of food, clothing, machinery, and medicines to say that the most acute short-

ages of all are religious. Demobilization has been hindering, limiting the Church of Christ for the fifty years past. The greatest need in America, in the world, is more and better men in the ministry and priesthood. To that end, we must recruit vigorously for the church through the seminaries. Every denomination in America is undermanned, every church in every city in need of stronger, better leadership. In this I am not speaking as a critical layman but am quoting my wise friends of the clergy who humbly issue the call to the young men of today to do more than they, the older men, have done, be more than they have been.

We can all tell what *more* men means but what of *better*? Better students, better trained? Yes, but it is not merely a matter of academics. The seminaries have able professors and good curricula, and the B.D. degree in many schools calls for work worthy of a doctorate.

The new emphasis is not as tangible as courses, credits, theses. It is on *persons*, producing leaders who are persons, what the dictionary calls "human beings emphatically distinguished from things and lower animals." A person is not assembled from selected skills, nor is he the climax of a sequence of courses. If a student at this school took all the courses in the catalog—each very valuable in its way—it would take him about sixteen years to finish; and he might still not be able to face the first minor crisis in his parish. If he went on through all the non-duplicating courses in two or three other great seminaries he would be fifty years in training. And he still might be unable to warm the heart of a child or ease the pain of a suffering father or fill the hungry people with the message of Jesus Christ.

In a real person there are three elements that piece out his formal education, that illumine it, convert it, make it live. The old terms have been ill-considered by our generation, but, knowing no up-to-date synonyms, I shall use them. They are grace, mercy, and love.

Physicians acknowledge that in the course of scientific advance they are best equipped to deal with the diseases they are least likely to meet. If sin would only confine itself to the areas we know how to treat scientifically, matters would be simpler. But it doesn't, and in the lonely road a minister has to go, there are chasms to span, enemies to battle, and dark places to enter where he needs all the light and strength of love and mercy and grace.

We need good students, able, intelligent young men and women. Yet they need be no more brilliant than the twelve disciples, and, unless they have strong compensating qualities, perhaps they would better not be as bright as Judas Iscariot. He seems to have had the highest I.Q. of the twelve, and he relied on it too much. I suspect that if the Stanford-Binet test had been given to the covenanters at Pentecost, the experts would have advised against going ahead with the Christian Church. We must have well trained ministers according to the standards of the best modern scholarship. It is not a question whether a minister should speak Aramaic as Jesus did, or English. English is an obvious essential here and now and with other minimum essentials is lumped for convenience under the requirement of a B.A. degree for entry into seminary training. Our scholarly standards for the divinity degrees must be maintained and improved. Practical techniques must be more ingeniously taught. But we must see to it that the graduate is more than a technician, more than a scholar; he must be a person, emphatically a human being, a neighbor and a son of God.

A theological school is not a set of religious-looking buildings on a hill. It is a focal point in a great action, the greatest enterprise of earth and heaven. Men are drawn from all over America, all over the world, to serve as teachers and lecturers. Young men and women come from your town, your church to grow in wisdom and grace under the guidance of these men. After a time they return to you to share

with you their understanding, to work with you in your community, to assist you in the training of your children in the way they should go, and to be taught further by you in the countless ways a man must learn from his friends if he is to learn broadly and truly in the span of his years.

A theological school is composed of alumni, too, who are the witness of the school among the churches, the commenders of the school to young people, the advance agents of the school in all its outreach. The churches themselves are a part of the school, in this case, particularly the churches of the Pacific Coast serving and being served by the school, but also churches everywhere that have sent students into our classes, teachers to our platforms, trustees to our Board, and funds to secure the business operation of the school.

A theological school is a great company of stewards, people of good will who dedicate a portion of time, talent, and money to the end that the name of Jesus Christ may be spoken among all men and that his mission may be fulfilled in all the earth.

This is no parochial celebration. What we do today at the Pacific School of Religion, tomorrow intimately affects the lives of human beings across the nation. What we do tomorrow will be felt one day in cities and villages where men speak in different tongues but have the same Father and need to know their brothers that they may live in peace.

When I was trying to decide if I should accept the invitation to be president, I questioned and inquired of many people. One of my friends described the school glowingly and concluded, "It's really a jewel of a place!" I find that that figure of speech stays with me as I go about my work. The president of the Pacific School of Religion is no engineer building vastly, nor is he the manager directing a system nor the promoter of a campaign. Rather he is a person charged simply with gathering scholars and stu-

dents into a small enterprise with a world mission and charged too with securing a program and developing an atmosphere which will make the years spent in our company wholly fruitful and productive. To return to the metaphor, he is, if you will, a lapidary charged with the care and proper use of the jewel. He must keep it clear and sharp, so that it catches

the light, and adjust it delicately so that it refracts the lights, sending its beams straight to the dark places of earth and into the dim recesses of the human heart. And the light—? It is carved in stone on our hill, as it was written of old, and as I say to you, *In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.*

A Layman Looks at the Church

Prelenten Study Conference Congregational Ministers of New England
Springfield, Massachusetts, February 25, 1946

Ralph E. Flanders

Boston, Mass.

IN discussing the topic assigned to me, I wish to start with a description of some of the problems of the lay conscience. By that term is meant the force of a man's conscience acting in the field of his lay responsibilities as distinguished from his spiritual responsibilities. Whether the two areas should be or can be distinguished from each other is a part of the question.

The Christian layman in the modern world is loaded with responsibilities which may not be different in kind from those which have been laid upon him throughout history. There is at least, however, a new development in that one kind of these ancient responsibilities has been greatly magnified in volume and intensity of impact. Reference is made to the duties and tasks which are involved in the daily work of the Christian, in the earning of his bread, in his responsibilities to others similarly engaged, and particularly to the extent that it applies to the responsibilities of supervision and stewardship of each individual.

In this area the layman feels a degree of competence at least so far as technical competence is concerned, although subject to the limitations of knowledge and

experience in a world which is rapidly growing more complex and difficult to analyze or manage. At least such competence as there is, is lay competence.

In carrying out his responsibilities the layman often finds himself out of step with official spiritual guidance. Sometimes the realization of this will call his attention to a real neglect of spiritual responsibilities that lie in the lay field. At least as often, and perhaps more often, the layman is driven to the conclusion that his spiritual guides live in an unreal world, and that any endeavor to follow them implicitly would bring disorder upon our society as it is now organized, to the extent that chaos and resulting human suffering would ensue.

This conflict accounts, I am convinced, for a considerable measure of the indifference to the church felt by men in active business life. I am not sure that it is the cause of the indifference of farmers and wage-earners, to the extent that the indifference exists among these social groups. The causes may, however, be related in that both are due to the lack of a clear, powerful spiritual message, convincing to the modern man of goodwill wherever he may be found.

The area of this agreement, or rather lack of agreement, with which we are concerned may be roughly defined as the area of economics and sociology. In other words it is the area which the social sciences are intended to cover. Let it be first said that the social sciences are not sciences in the sense that the word can be applied to physics, chemistry, mathematics and similar studies. The social sciences are studies in human behavior. Human behavior is so complex and unpredictable that it is doubtful whether economics and sociology should be called sciences at all. They may have a scientific basis to the extent that their structures are erected on a foundation of observation and statistics, but we can never be sure, or at least up to this time we never have been sure, how human beings will act in the face of the new conditions continuously presented by an evolving social universe.

Perhaps we can express the ultimate ethical goal of humanity in the terms of the old Communist precept, now honored more in the breach than in the observance, particularly in Russia. That precept read, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need."

This is the economic or social restatement of the Golden Rule and Christians, it would seem, are committed to it with all the force of their training and belief. Surely Christian laymen cannot find fault if their spiritual guides express the ultimate social goals of a Christian world in these terms.

What puzzles the layman is not so much what ought to be, as expressed in this precept, versus what is. What puzzles him is rather the conflict between what ought to be and *what will work*. To put the conflict more pointedly still, he is concerned with the Communist (and Christian) precept, and the profit system.

Let us take a look at the profit system. What is it? What does it do that is useful? What are its failings?

The Capitalistic System is one of those harsh inhuman aspects of society which corresponds to the harsh inhuman aspects of nature in general. Technically speaking, it is a system in which the means of production for the necessities and luxuries of life are privately owned, so that the acquirement of those necessities and luxuries is dependent upon the ability of the ordinary man to come to terms with the man or group in possession. While this is by no means a complete definition of Capitalism, it is true as far as it goes and does present in its most bald and uncompromising form some of the harsh aspects of the system.

Another characteristic of Capitalism is that its motive power is the expectation of profit for those who control the tools of production. Production is not based on individual or social need as to quantity and kind of output. It is based solely on the question as to whether the processes of production will or will not be profitable to the possessor of the tools of production.

This is a description of the system in its baldest form; but to understand all the essential factors involved, we shall have to say something more than this about our present economic system. There is another element in our economic structure which is fully as important as private ownership and the profit system, and that is the very great division of labor and the consequent complexity of the processes by which the raw materials of sea, forest, farm, and mine are transformed into food, clothing, shelter, and luxuries for the peoples of the earth, and are distributed to them for their use and enjoyment. We cannot look about us at the world in which we live without being astonished at the elaborateness with which our life is organized. Each of us has some little segment of the world's work to do. This work we cannot do unless it is brought to us or opportunity is otherwise made for us to get to it; and in general the work itself has little connection with the food, clothing, shelter, education, and amusement which is re-

quired to satisfy our personal needs and which we hope to obtain in return for our productive efforts.

There is, perhaps, no better way to bring this fact clearly before our minds than to think of this New England region in earlier times. Four hundred years ago this state was inhabited by some few thousands of red men who lived by hunting, fishing, and by the crudest imaginable forms of agriculture. Trade was confined to the interchange of a few goods not easily obtainable in every location. There was a demand for flint or other hard stones for arrowheads, for shells for ornament, and for a few other simple commodities which were handed about from place to place on a barter basis.

We may imagine that this simple barbaric method of life was satisfactory to the people who lived under it. They had enough to eat, even if the variety and delicacy of the food fell short of that required by our taste. Their clothing and shelter here sufficient for their hardy constitutions, even though most of us would be acutely uncomfortable if we had to live with them through the winter months. But we must remember that on this basis of hunting, simple agriculture and rudimentary trade, only a very few people could be supported in what is now New England. The population could never have exceeded a few thousand. More than this would have drawn too heavily on the supply of game. Larger populations were, in fact, prevented by the continuous intertribal warfare by which bands of Indians sought to protect their hunting territory from other tribes who looked at it with covetous eyes.

II

Then came the white man, in ever larger numbers. First were the pioneers whose life in the forest and cleared land was very simple. A few metal tools for clearing the forest and working wood, a few metal dishes for cooking, and crude spinning wheels and looms were all that

were needed to make a self-sustaining community in the virgin forests and meadows. But these few tools, together with the skill and experience for using them, made it possible for tens or hundreds of thousands of white men to exist in increased comfort in a territory which had formerly maintained only its few thousands of red men.

Tools and handicrafts and machines and organization continued to grow through the decades until our capital, Boston, became a metropolitan center with hundreds of thousands and then millions of population, with industries which draw upon subsidiary regions that extend not merely for the ten, twenty, or thirty mile stretch reaching out along its highways; Boston draws upon and serves subsidiary regions which extend far beyond that, not only throughout this state but throughout the nation and to the far corners of the world.

In our major industries we find factories of enormous size with complicated organizations. As we saw, increasing complexity of organization in past years made it possible to support increasing populations in all the earlier stages of the history of this region. So now we find that in this latest and fullest development, this area supports many millions of men, women, and children. It is tools, machines, and organization which have done this. Without these tools, machines, and this organization, this great region would revert to the wilderness of the red men, and its inhabitants would perish in a few weeks.

Let us look at any modern, highly developed product with seeing eyes. If we look at the automobile, for instance, we realize how great is the complexity of the processes by which it has been assembled and made available for our use, comfort, and pleasure. Rubber comes in peace times from the East Indies on the other side of the globe; there are wool from Texas, the Argentine, and Australia; manganese from Brazil and Russia; tungsten from China; copper from South

America; these are but a few of the obvious and large-scale elements in its construction. An incalculable number of little materials and services make up the great aggregate which is placed at our disposal. There is scarcely a state or a county in the United States from which are not drawn some materials or some supply of skilled brain or hand required by the automobile industry.

These men and these materials gathered from thousands of miles away steadily progress toward the crowded industrial centers. They stop along the way—the materials for processing, and the men for training and experience—and then move on again, their myriad lines finally focusing in some single great factory; and then from there goes forth a finished product—over highways, over railroads, by lake steamer, and by ocean steamship—to the far corners of this country and the world, to customers persuaded of its value, provided by their own elaborate productive organizations with funds for its purchase, and convinced by advertising and sales effort that this is the product which they wish to buy.

The complication of this great machinery of production and distribution is too great for any one person ever to comprehend it as a whole; and yet for years at a time it works steadily along by the coordinated effort of all the men and women engaged in the industry.

III

The point which needs to be emphasized is this—that the extreme complexity of organization of our Capitalistic Economy must be kept in mind as a ruling physical fact. We must particularly keep it in mind whenever we are considering the moral implications of private ownership of the means of production and distribution for profit, instead of for human need. Physically, the system is one which enables ten or one hundred or one thousand families to live where previously but one could exist; and the important implication is this—that if its organization be

seriously disturbed, it will not be possible for all of those families to live in the area which now supports them. The destruction of the Capitalistic System without effectively replacing it by some other mechanism of equivalent efficiency would result in millions of individuals literally perishing.

It is in the organizing function of Capitalism that we find its deepest significance, and that organizing function is energized by the hope for profit. The possession of the tools of industry is of less importance. The tools can be seized by the workers. They have been so seized. But the whole mechanism of production ceased to function in the new hands, lacking the organizing facility of the Capitalistic System.

Capitalism in its basic structure seems to be unmoral and unjust. Yet upon its preservation, or replacement by some social machinery not yet developed, depend the physical lives of millions of our fellow-citizens.

Its function as a method of organization of society is the forgotten aspect of Capitalism. As such, it was not invented by some man or group of men. It has grown by evolution and is in a sense as much a part of nature as is the enormous wastage of life which keeps the biological balance between the various forms of life. Indeed, from the standpoint of wastage as against efficiency, one cannot view the Capitalistic System as being anything but an improvement over the subhuman systems for the perpetuation and control of living beings on the earth's surface.

There does seem to be a natural order in the universe and a spiritual order. The profit system would seem to belong to the natural order and the Christian-Communist precept to the spiritual order. Are they both of divine origin; or is one Satanic and the other Divine? Or is the one completely outside the moral order, while the other lies within it?

It is questions of this sort that the leaders of the Christian church should be concerning themselves with. But so far as I am aware they are either blind to

the problems or unable to suggest solutions. My own unguided and perhaps misguided thinking, for the little it may be worth, is offered herewith.

IV

I believe that the order of nature is not at variance with the spiritual order, and that the order of nature contains the laws of human nature. These laws admit both good wills and evil wills; and I would not exclude the terrifying notion that there is a Satanic spirit loose in the universe. It is difficult to explain much that has happened in the last generation on any other basis than this.

Conversely, I have complete faith in the existence of a Deity, without whose existence the world, even with its evils and miseries, just simply does not make sense.

As I see it the Old Testament is fundamentally the historical record of the endeavor of man to decipher the nature and purposes of God from an intense observation of the natural order, by a race with a genius for spiritual insight. The long upward history of the Jews, the meditations of Job, the poetry of the Psalms, the visions of the Prophets were all directed to this purpose, and form a magnificent unrolling pageant of expanding relations between man and his Maker.

Yet the picture was never complete. There was always something missing. What for want of a better word we may call the "personality" of the Deity escaped observation. Something there was that was unrevealed—something mysterious, incomprehensible and terrifying. In the hearts of these spiritual pioneers there grew a deepening sense of need for further revelation. That need deepened into a firm conviction that the revelation would come.

God *was* revealed to man in the person of Jesus. No longer were we left in doubt as to God's character and purposes. So far as human comprehension can grasp them we know them, and the revelation

is one that satisfies our deepest needs and aspirations.

But still the revelation is not complete, or, if complete, is not completely understood, so that something yet remains for mankind to learn and to accept. What is the relationship between the natural order and the spiritual order? How combine the attributes and purposes of the Deity of the Old Testament with the revealed Deity of Jesus? To bring the question down with a dull thud to the plane in which we are living and talking tonight, how can we reconcile our dependence on the profit system (which with all of its faults and failings has brought material blessings beyond any other economic system devised so far)—how can we reconcile our dependence on this system with the high spiritual implications of the formula, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need," in view of the sad fact that this formula has never worked on the large social scale?

The obvious retort is that society has never been Christianized, and that if it were, this precept would be followed to the material and spiritual advantages of that Christianized society.

This may be true, but what is the layman's duty and responsibilities in an un-Christianized society? In general, the layman's conscience holds him to his secular duties. If that conscience has validity the problem is one for spiritual leadership to reconcile itself with, rather than a problem for the layman himself to solve. As a layman, I herewith present the problem.

There are spiritual needs of the Christian layman which too often are not met. There is the need for pure worship. This is something different from listening to a concert in church or to a lecture on subjects about which the layman may know more than the preacher, or at least may think he knows more.

The need is for an opportunity to listen to or to join in sincere prayer, to sing spiritual hymns whose words were in-

spired by sincere devotion and which for the most part have stood the test of generations and centuries, and whose tunes and harmonies are consonant with the high values of the accompanying words. The need is also for simple but uncompromising homilies on the relations be-

tween man and his Maker, given by one speaking with authority.

From such fare he can absorb the nourishment and strength for his daily tasks. From such doctrine the Soul can bring itself into harmony with its Maker and its destiny.

Kingdom Building in Rural America

The Rev. Robert Bruce, D.D.

Superintendent New York Congregational Christian Conference

A QUARTER of a century ago it was the custom for most ministers to look upon their profession as the greatest in the world. It may be now, but the modern minister does not express the conviction as often as did his brother of a past generation. At least one boy, who frequently heard his minister speak with enthusiasm about his profession, became a minister. Probably there are many others. Certainly the business of making God known to man and reconciling and relating man to God is of the utmost importance. There could be no vocation offering greater opportunities of eternal value.

The minister is not primarily interested in building a career. He does not think first of all in terms of a comfortable life and reward in the coin of the world. To be sure the laborer is worthy of his hire. If he has taken to himself a wife and acquired a family he is responsible for their support—or, so Paul says, “is worse than an infidel.” But beyond the necessities of life for himself and his own he has found there are values not to be counted or measured by the ordinary standards of men. The true minister of Jesus Christ seeks a Kingdom. The reign of the Kingdom of God in his own heart, and the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God in the world.

The question comes, then, to every young man entering the ministry, “Where may I best serve the Kingdom?”

The question will be answered variously in the lives of different men. Some will be led to stately churches on wide avenues. Others will find their work in chaste sanctuaries on or near a college campus. There are ministers whose best work will be done in city churches that have refused to retreat before the inexorable advance of commerce and industry. The man of God is sorely needed in every kind of field, and each will yield its peculiar reward.

No minister may find a happier lot or live a more effective life than he who, on Sunday morning, crosses a village green or country road to mount the pulpit steps.

At the rate people are forsaking the city to live in the suburbs one might judge there is a consensus of opinion that the city as a place of residence can be improved upon. And one who is interested in building churches knows that the suburbs constantly are being pushed back farther into the country. With improved methods of transportation and communication rural residents are not isolated as they once were. And with modern conveniences in home construction available everywhere people may live as com-

fortably and graciously in the country as in the city. As the people in a parish install central heating, running water, indoor toilet and bath, the telephone and other conveniences they increasingly are providing the parsonage with the same accessories to the refinements of life. Today many articles of food and items of daily use are as common in the country as in the city.

It is true that as living conditions in the country improve the disparity between costs in country and city are disappearing. However, it is still true that one may live in the country more reasonably than in the city.

I

While there are ramshackle church properties all through the country, there are also churches and parsonages with dignified lines offering basic possibilities for usefulness and comfort. Not infrequently the parsonage is surrounded with broad lawns arched by ancient elms. One minister proudly boasted that he lived in the finest house in town. It was true. He would have required a salary many times the one received to live as well in the city.

On a sub-zero night with a blizzard blowing outside, a certain rural parsonage was warm and homey. The rooms were decorated and furnished in good taste. The lights were subdued to exactly the right degree of softness. A visitor remarked upon the comfort of the house. "Yes," the minister occupant explained, "last summer the house was insulated and a new heating plant installed." Other churches at not too great distance have been inspired by this example and are insulating and installing heating plants, also.

As in the city, you often meet the tight-fisted trustee who objects to what he considers unwarranted expense. But more and more frequently he is being out-voted and the improvements are being made in rural church property with greater consistency than one might expect.

In a tiny village among the mountains the parsonage visitor had been reading a current book left on the bedside table. He rose, switched off the bed lamp and rolled the shade to open the window. There was a full moon and the heavens were jewel-studded with stars. The view was breathtaking. In the distance the blue mountains. In the foreground a snow-white expanse with a blue spruce pointing its graceful symmetry to an illuminated clock in the church tower surmounted by a thin spire.

The next morning when the visitor stepped into the sanctuary it was like entering the Holy of Holies. At the right of the door was the baptismal font. Down a central aisle were a pulpit and lectern divided by a wide chancel. And commanding reverent attention stood the altar with its cross and candles. The white walls and pews with mahogany trim and the red carpet completed the appointments.

Another rural church with a central pulpit is quite as impressive. These two stand among the most beautiful sanctuaries this observer has visited in city or country.

Some one will complain that only the unusual has been described. In a measure that is true. It should be said the unusual is becoming the usual as rural congregations discover possibilities in their properties. And also, it should be noted, these unusual churches have been realized because of the leadership of some minister with vision, tact and energy. Innumerable churches dotting the countryside, waiting to be transformed stand a challenge to a spiritual, wise and aggressive ministerial leadership. Wise and aggressive ministerial leadership—a leadership which can conceive, initiate and execute a total parish program, covering each age group, that will recruit and nourish the membership of the church and lead the community to a knowledge of the effectiveness of the Christian gospel in the solution of human problems.

The Protestant Christian churches came

o America with the first settlers. Indeed, in many cases the first settlers came because of their Protestant convictions. America at the beginning was wholly rural. It has been predominately so through most of its history and until a fairly recent time. The Protestant Christian Church is indigenous to rural America. It has always been there. It belongs. For many reasons it devolves upon those of us who believe in Protestant Christianity to keep our churches strong in rural America.

II

The Protestant Church appeals to intelligent, self-reliant, altruistic men and women. People answering this description are found in large numbers in rural areas. A devoted minister about to retire who had been unusually successful in an important rural field, said, "We must have a well educated, gifted minister who keeps abreast of the times. The majority of the people here have graduated from normal or agricultural school or college."

It is not uncommon for a denominational executive to sit down with the principal and several teachers of a Central School, a village lawyer and doctor and several local merchants to discuss ministerial prospects. A minister sharing a delicious dinner, most of which was home produced, with a farmer and his wife learned that the farmer graduated from the State Agricultural School and his wife (daughter of a parsonage) graduated from a state normal college. Their children were preparing for had entered college.

Many rural churches which in the present course of events will close, would blossom with new life under strong, capable leadership.

A letter from a parish where only a few months ago a dozen people were attending a desultory Sunday service, now reports from sixty to seventy people every Sunday and on special occasions over a hundred filling every corner of the little church. Perhaps the preaching they hear

scarcely rates being called great, but it is honest, understanding and understandable and the people know the minister truly cares for them. After the service he does not forget them. He finds his way into their homes during the week.

A few weeks ago the visiting minister went into a church in a small village at the intersection of two county roads. By actual count there were more than 150 people present, a good proportion of men as well as women, and all ages from children through the various stages to the elderly—a fine cross section of the community. As the visitor rose to preach he thought, "What an opportunity for an ambitious young minister!" Involuntarily he compared the congregation with about the same number of people, all oldsters, he had seen on a previous Sunday scattered through the spaciousness of a richly endowed metropolitan church.

III

The country church is still sending members to its city sister. There is a small rural church gracing the roadside about fifteen miles from a sizeable city where the denomination has a large First Church. The former was organized prior to the latter. The First Church received its first members by letter from its rural neighbor. For 130 years the rural church has been dismissing members to the city church, among them one family which has given literally thousands of dollars to the missionary program of the fellowship.

Members have not been passing in the other direction from the city church to the country church in the same ratio. People moving to the country have been keeping their letters in the larger city churches. This should stir the country church to action. City people taking residence in the country should be a part of the community life especially in church membership and attendance.

If this movement of church membership so largely in one direction, which in some measure has happened endlessly

throughout the country should ever cease, what a misfortune for the city churches!

And there is no assurance it will not cease unless young ministers of the most promising abilities and fullest consecration are willing to train for the rural ministry. These ministers having conse-

crated their lives to the rural church will resolve not to be deflected by any circumstances from their vow of devotion. They will find their ultimate satisfaction and reward, as we all must, in building the Kingdom, as they may, in a fruitful rural community.

Evangelism and Our Modern Temper

Delivered at Springfield Study Conference by

Dr. John Hoon

Pastor Wesley Methodist Church, Springfield, Mass., and Executive Secretary of Evangelism of the New England Annual Conference of the Methodist Church.

ONE of the characteristics of our modern temper is that we are willing to give, take and throw away everything but ourselves. Sometimes I think we are willing to take ourselves and throw ourselves away, but we are never willing to give ourselves. John Foster Dulles has just returned from London. He points out that while America is in a position to take the lead in world affairs, the American people have no great demanding purpose that they are willing to follow.

Our temper is colored with secularism, special privilege, deceit, compromise as well as anti-religious and anti-social tendencies and attitudes. The world needs to take a look at God. What men need is God. What we preachers must do above all else is to give our people God—the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. Strangely enough, this is evangelism. In some ways, evangelism will not be readily received today. Our modern temper is conditioned against it. The sinners, the secularists, those in entrenched power, the fascist-minded and the communistic-minded, as well as the intellectualists and the Christian Educators will form blocks of opposition. But we must press on.

I have discovered in evangelism a method of approaching the modern man with the modern temper and to win him to Christ and the Church. The success

of the modern church will be determined by the position which the church takes in influencing the social, political, economic and religious movements for good among all mankind. Within the areas of the churches, direct responsibility, such a penetrating influence will have to do with the following:

1. What we do with the present active membership of our churches.
2. What we do with the present inactive members of our churches.
3. What we do about the sixty millions of unchurched people in the United States.
4. What we do about the service people who return home.
5. What we do about the establishing of new churches, reviving dying churches and readjusting federated and union churches.
6. What we do about recruiting young men and young women for the Christian life and the Christian services.

All of these things have to do with evangelism as the initiatory step to be followed with Christian Education and an effective program of the stewardship of life.

My testimony is that I have found evangelism as a field, a force and a fun. It first happened in Indianapolis, where I engaged in an afternoon's survey

with Dr. I. E. Putnam of Minneapolis, Minn. In two and one-half hours we made thirty-three residential contacts around the square block and found twenty-four prospective members for the Methodist church. This opened my eyes to the field possibility that could be found in almost any community. The field is further presented by the possibilities contained in the Church School enrollment and the families related thereto, as well as in the general constituency of the church and the weekly visitors and new friends who come to almost every church in the community. "The fields are white already to harvest." I was made aware of this field.

Then, in this experience of evangelism, I was made aware of the force or power of the Holy Spirit to move hearts and wills, to change attitudes, conditions of living and project new hope for the future. There are several kinds of effective evangelism: Pastoral, educational, public, personal. But visitation evangelism recruits to church, for (1) the pastor trains the workers; (2) the laymen do the bulk of the work; (3) the pastor gives the spiritual guidance after decisions; (4) the pastor receives the people to the church after adequate preparation in which laymen largely engage; and (5) the laymen do the educational and assimilation work which establishes ("congregations") the individual in the fellowship of the church.

Surveys have shown that in public evangelism 15 per cent are won to Christ

and the Church and the "stayability" is not as great. Visitation evangelism has demonstrated over a period of years the ability to win 50 per cent or more of the prospects on the first visit, and to assimilate them into the church on a range of permanency much higher than any other type of evangelism. Thus, I was made aware of the force of evangelism.

Finally, I was made aware of the fun of Evangelism. My men said to me—business men and busy men—"Preacher, this is the real stuff! Why haven't you asked me to do this long before now?" There are thrills in watching a 67-year-old man make his decision for Christ and the Church. There are thrills in having a person call up and say, "Because that 67-year-old man was baptized yesterday, I guess I can be baptized. I am only 34, but I have been battling against appearing before the public as old as I am for ten years." There is no fun like this! And out yonder is the field. With the Holy Spirit of God is the power. Only the enjoyment of bringing men, women and youth awaits your step. As Mary Carolyn Davis sings:

"Where the sun shines in the street,
There are very many feet
Seeking God all unaware
That their hastening is a prayer.

Perhaps these feet would think it odd
(Who think they are on business bent)
If Some one went and told them:
'You are seeking God!'"

A LITANY OF THANKSGIVING, PENITENCE AND DEDICATION FOR THE PEOPLE AND THE MINISTER OF THE CHURCH

A. O Almighty God our Father, Who art made known unto us through Jesus Christ our Lord, we who are of Thy church lift our hearts unto Thee in adoration and humility; and we ask that Thou wilt be heard of each of us, as in prayer we remember the past, and make high resolve for the future.

* * *

- M. For the ministration of the Church as she has surrounded us with her care from birth till now,
 P. We give Thee our thanks, O God.
 M. For her consecration of our loves in marriage, for the high purpose she has brought in the hour of the baptism of our children, for her words of consolation and hope, spoken when our loved ones have stepped into the Beyond,
 P. Our hearts are filled with gratitude unto Thee.
 M. For the sense of being part of a great company of fellow Christians, who live and work far beyond the walls of this building—where ever in Thy world the name of Christ is called upon,
 P. We are grateful unto Thee, the Father of us all.
 M. For the guidance of the Church in days of youth; for her direction in years of maturity; for her labors on our behalf whereby she has brought us to know the companionship and constant power of our Lord and Master,
 P. We are thankful beyond measure.

* * *

- M. We remember before Thee how often we have failed faithlessly in the fulfillment of our Christian vows and obligations,
 P. And in humility we ask for Thy forgiveness.
 M. In the Light of Thy presence there rises the haunting memory of hours when we have deliberately chosen the lesser good; when we have put self-interest above the welfare of others, when we have chosen the counsels of men rather than of God;
 P. And we pray that Thou wilt stay nearby, to strengthen every Christian desire, and make it more than conqueror.
 M. For unwillingness to share with others our Christian knowledge and experience; for our hesitancy to trust Thee in hours of perplexity; for our half-hearted devotion to Thy Way of Life for us and all men.
 P. We ask Thy forgiveness, and the great mercy of another chance.

* * *

- M. We are Thy people O God, part of the great World Church of Christ, and as Thy people we would renew our vows of Christian discipleship.
 P. Accept again, our Father, the offering of ourselves unto Thee.
 M. As we seek to do Thy will in our time, enlarge our understanding, quicken our sympathies, increase the Christian outreach of our living.
 P. Hear our prayer for Christian outreach and strength in living, Our Father.
 M. As Christian people, may no false sense of privilege or complacency or fear, separate us in Christian understanding from any race or nation or people.
 P. Keep us ever aware O God, of our brotherhood with all men under Thee.
 M. Inspire Thy Church with Thy spirit. Awaken her to responsibility for Christian leadership in a perplexing world. And give us the wisdom and desire to put Thy will ever first.

* * *

- P. and M. (in unison) O Thou who are the Father of the Christ of Nazareth and our Father, be with us as people and minister, as together in this Church we seek to be deserving of the name of "Christian"—this day and always.

The Choral Response

The Editor Fills In

SO much depends upon when and where you are. Seven o'clock A.M. E.S.T. is not yet the promise of dawn on the Pacific Coast, and the slow blossomings of the seventh of May in eastern Massachusetts begins to be only memory in more advanced regions. One might trace so much by the drift of fallen petals across a continent or the procession of plowshares from field to field between the seas. Histories and habitudes are determined by the variations of the great constants, and such a scientist as Ellsworth Huntington can make an epic of climatic changes, recover the dry seasons of a vanished past from the rings of a fallen California redwood and write great aspects of human history in terms of climatic variability. But he reaches one interesting conclusion: "The variability of the earth's climate is almost as extraordinary as its uniformity." . . . "In spite of all manner of variations, now this way and then the other . . . there are sharply defined limits beyond which no changes of any kind have gone since life, as we know it, first began." In so many words another earth has always come back to normal, though never quite unchanged on the grand scale.

There are other climates than those paced by isothermal lines; soul climates, mind climates, social climates, economic and industrial climates, climates of international relation and what else have you. History can also be written in terms of their variations. There have been relatively good peaceful times when nothing was too much stirred up. Then the present seemed reasonably understandably the future reasonably secure. Then for some reason or reasons everything breaks up, nothing is secure and the future becomes apparently unpredictable. There must have been a good many such epochs in our human past for some of which we have no records at all. We are certainly just now living through a time like that

and it is not easy. Anything but easy.

Everything we do or think or say is affected by it, even a fugitive editorial in the MINISTER'S QUARTERLY, since least of all can the Churches and their leaders ignore not only the signs of the times, but the embattled forces of the times. The "signs of the times" are only symptomatic, the travail of the times have deep, deep rootings and when we trace them down and down they are in the human spirit. And this surely is the province of the Churches and their leaders, and judging by the signs of the times we do not seem to have administered that province well.

* * *

A very great deal in contemporary theology is no help. Preaching needs theology of course, but it needs a theology which can be preached with some hope of the congregation understanding it. John Bennet's admirable article in this issue makes that clear enough, and his luminous wisdom is in assuring contrast with the brilliant and more or less fascinating obscurantism which more or less names itself "Neo-orthodoxy." There is all the difference in the world between being basal and being up in the clouds. We have all sinned and come short of the mark. There is no use arguing that at any considerable length. The main thing now is to get back again on the high-roads of right human relationships. That road we have missed and are missing at a tragic cost to our civilizations and our souls.

The last chapters in any of St. Paul's epistles are better guideposts to the Christian way of human relationships than his earlier doctrinal chapters. He needed the ground work of the doctrines before he could set up the sign-posts; so do we. But we need also desperately to get beyond the doctrines to the guide-posts and use, in all our disputes, the timeless imperatives of the Christian "way" which are always and everywhere so near to

life. Preaching must get near to life by way of the ruling constants of the Christian gospel. They are all there for any one to read—and so hard to reach and live out. But they can be preached in season and out of season (though they are never out of season) and the head lines of every newspaper stress their urgency beyond words to say.

* * *

Preaching ought to be assuring now as well as convincing. That, maybe, is what is meant by "getting back to God"; back to the sovereignty of the moral order; back to the faith that there is a Power which in the end controls our stormy ways; that there are saving obediences and a mercy to heal and restore, and a love which chastens in order that it may heal. Preaching in a time like this should proclaim and interpret the abiding. St. Paul defined that also and finally. Faith and hope and love *are* the abiding, but they need so much interpreting. What are the foundation things to believe here and now? What, disillusioned almost to despair, do we dare to hope for and work for.

The eclipse of hope, or else the reduction of cooperative hope to all sorts of little fighting-one-another hopes, like more wages and less work, and group dominance at social cost or power politics, shadows everything else. The times need a renaissance of a hope which unites instead of dividing us, the vision to see it and the courage to trust it. Love needs so much interpreting—almost more than faith and hope. What now should be its ways and wisdoms and instruments? If it be, as it is, a glowing and creative goodwill, how can it be brought into action or reach those who seem beyond either its power or its appeal? Such questions as these are on the steps of all pulpit stairs, or else they face the preacher, seen or unseen, when he has climbed his pulpit stairs.

One of the Federal Conciliators, the newspapers say, advised the contestants

of the coal strike, as they separated on a Saturday, to go to church the next day and pray God for guidance; which they probably didn't, or else having prayed were still unchanged. But what other solvent is there for these bitterly militant attitudes save the Christian gospel and the Christian spirit? Perhaps it might have made a difference if they had prayed *together*. So many of the socially and industrially alienated must worship somewhere, perhaps as they worshipped they missed the *together*. A bright article in this issue suggests that the estranged go fishing together, a wise suggestion. But suppose they met around a Communion table *together* and opened their minds and spirits to its wordless power! All of which comes to this. The Churches and their mandates, their messages, their healings and unitings of shared worship, possess a power which, unused, should rebuke us, used so inadequately should humble us and by the sheer splendor of it challenge all that we have and are.

* * *

Whether this issue of the PREACHER'S QUARTERLY will reach its readers before Memorial Day here in the North, is now on the knees of the North River Press (it takes a long time to get an issue through). We who are older remember the Memorial Days of a long generation ago. We see again the diminishing ranks of the Grand Army of the Republic, the faded blue uniforms, the grave faces, the flower-decked graves. We feel again the protest and tender over-brooding peace as though nothing were left of fratricidal strife save the recollection of heroism and sacrifice and the healing of time. There are many more to remember now. The graves girdle the globe and no flower of our can reach them save as we lay upon their distant graves the wreaths of repentance and affection, and again resolve, in spite of all which rebukes and sobers us, that they shall not have died in vain.

* * *

Meanwhile as the editor thus fills t

pace that is left him and, counting the words, leaves so much unsaid which no one of us can say at all—or alone, the peace of a May morning lies across the Marshfield hills. The great constants of earth and sky are unfailing and they are, to speak, but the trailing garments of Divine constancy which will not fail us, if we do not fail it.

O Thou, whose mighty patience holds the night and day alike in view,
Why will our dearest hopes enfold,
O keep us steadfast, patient, true."

The editor has, through want of system, accumulated and confused too many contributed articles. He has, he hopes, never lost a manuscript or embezzled a stamp, but he has in some cases manuscripts without addresses, and addresses without manuscripts. If the patient and long-suffering contributors who have never had their articles, either published or returned, will send him detailed postcards, he will do his best to straighten things out. Which includes the lovely Litany in this issue.

Our Reading Fellowship

(Being a report from The Rev. Max Webster, of Burlington, Vt.)

WE have not bothered to choose a name for ourselves and somehow that doesn't seem to matter. We are just a "reading group." Our inspiration came in the beginning from the Associates In Reading, that group which after a number of years of unofficial leadership has become a committee of the department of the Ministry. Following suggestions made by them, seven or eight ministers from Burlington and vicinity began a program of reading and study. We purchased the selected books from the Pilgrim Press, as many sets of them as we needed to permit everyone to read each volume by the time of our meeting. We met as many times as there were books on the list, spending a full Monday morning to discuss each volume in turn. There was a chairman to act as moderator and a secretary to see that the books kept circulating properly. At the end of the season the books were sold to members.

At first our plan was simply to discuss the contents and significance of the particular book under consideration, with no view by any one individual but with the understanding that each member had read the book. Lately one member has been named to represent a twenty-minute study of the book's subject matter and contribu-

tion, and to be responsible for focusing our attention upon its salient points, but it is still the rule that every person read the book for himself. We believe this rule (though not *perfectly* observed) is the main reason why our study has proved so valuable to us all.

The group is interdenominational. Most are comparatively young ministers, but the finest contribution has been brought by one of the older members. We have all found intellectual stimulation and a fellowship that we very greatly need. Our wives evidently think the plan is good too, for they have proposed having a similar reading group of their own—at another time and using books of a somewhat different character. (They do not want us to select their list!)

When the Associates' list of books did not appear at the usual date last summer, our reading group decided that the program of study was so valuable that they could not afford to give it up or postpone it, so they chose four books themselves and held their meetings as usual. Even if the titles selected are not as good a choice as that later made by the Associates (and who is to say?), this initiative indicates how exceedingly helpful one reading fellowship found this program to be.

Report of Roundtable Discussion

of the

Department of the Ministry and representatives of Seminaries training men for the
Congregational Christian Churches.

Held at Hartford Seminary Foundation, April 8-9, 1946.

PRESENT: William J. Campbell, Willard T. Carter, Clarence S. Dunham, James F. English, Frederick L. Fagley, Leon E. Grubaugh, Thomas W. Graham, Fred L. Hall, Roger Hazelton, Hugh Hartshorne, Horace F. Holton, Ralph C. Jenkins, William A. Leath, Elden Mills, Arthur C. McGiffert, Arthur L. Swift, Russell H. Stafford, Edward Sayler, Thomas Tripp, Harry Trust, Ralph L. Woodward, George R. Wells, Tertius VanDyke.

This round table was the second annual meeting designed to bring into closer relationship the Churches and the Seminaries. The Department of the Ministry will give continued attention to this feature of its program.

In brief the program was:

1. An outline of the present status of the program of the Department of the Ministry by the Chairman and the Director and a report on Seminary Visitation by the Director.
2. A consideration of In-Service Train-Help for pastors presented by Thomas Tripp. The use of Seminary facilities for In-Service training presented by Arthur L. Swift.
3. A discussion of the report by Hartshorne and Froyd on Theological Education in the Northern Baptist Convention led by Hugh Hartshorne.
4. A presentation of the Ohio Proposals concerning the standards, In-service training and work of the ministry by William A. Leath.
5. The Status of Religious Education and the Director of Religious Education as related to the Seminary and pastor was outlined by Arthur C. McGiffert and George R. Wells.

6. A brief discussion of the Churches interest in Seminary curricula led by Ralph L. Woodward in the absence of Dr. Weigle.

SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

1. The report of the Director of the Department of the Ministry, F. L. Fagley, indicated that as soon as the problems of the ministry began to be adequately investigated by the Denomination, the question of the Church-Seminary relationship came to the fore. The findings of this round table will be a part of the Department's recommendations at Grinnell.

During the past year Mr. Fagley has visited or corresponded with 166 Congregational students in the Seminaries. These are distributed through three classes. We have 50 to 55 seniors this year. Seminary students who come over to Congregationalism from other denominations will probably increase this number to 70 by the end of the school year. We need 200 men each year to keep the ranks of our ministry full. Thus it is obvious we need a new emphasis on a program for recruiting.

Of 166 men interviewed 77 said it was their pastor who was the determining influence in their decision for the ministry. Not many ministers seem to think recruiting is a part of their job. We must develop a consciousness of the recruiting need and responsibility in our ministry. The program of recruiting must begin early as is shown by the fact that 70 men made their decision for the ministry in high school or before, while 89 decided in college or after. The states from which ministerial students come are pretty generally distributed. The predominant number attend Seminaries in New England.

They tend to begin their ministry in the vicinity of the schools which they attend.

Conferences with Seminary students by Mr. Fagley, indicate that some of our Congregational men are confused, lonely and at low ebb spiritually. They seem to feel they are missing something boys from other denominations get. We must develop a nurturing and fellowship plan for our men in the Seminaries. Should we appoint a chaplain for each Seminary? A respected, competent Congregational minister serving a church near the school could serve in this capacity and be father confessor and counsellor to our students. This suggestion was ont supported by the Seminary representatives who favored a denominational ministry to Seminary students by representation of the national office of the denomination.

2. In considering In-service training, Thomas Tripp first gave us a picture of the educational background of the ministers with whom we deal. Adequate information was received on 724 men ordained by the Denomination from 1937-43 inclusive: 524 were Seminary graduates, 23 from Bible Institutes and 177 listed no school; 414 became full time religious career men, 189 have given a part of their time to religious work since graduation and 121 never have entered the preaching ministry or chaplaincy. The majority of men preach in churches of 100 to 200 members, in small towns and are in the \$1500-2000 salary bracket.

Indications are:

- (a) Our men have a miscellaneous type of education.
- (b) We have some men headed eventually for work other than the pastorate. Can we stop this leak with In-service training?
- (c) There are wide differentials in the intellectual interests and reading of our men.
- (d) Chaplaincy adjustments must be made as a result of the war.
- (e) There are racio-nationality variations in our ministry.

Current In-service training resources of our Denomination or available to it are:

- (a) Sylvandale and Deering Summer Schools.
- (b) Convocations by States.
- (c) Adult assemblies and Conferences (Lay and Minister).
- (d) Seminary Convocations.
- (e) Rural leadership short courses.
- (f) Industrial pastors' schools.
- (g) Special interest institutes.
- (h) Traveling libraries.
- (i) Ministers' meetings.
- (j) Guided field work—Summer Service-internship.
- (k) Associates in Reading and Discussion.
- (l) Correspondence Courses and extension courses.

No adequate investigation has been made as to whether these resources are adequate or not. We need a survey to determine whether they should be supplemented or altered in program. There was general agreement that this whole field should be explored and recommendations made for adequate In-service training.

Arthur L. Swift discussed the Seminary as related to In-service training. Present Summer Conferences held by some Seminaries can be on credit or non-credit basis but cannot cover whole field of needs in one Summer. Should encourage men to repeat attendance. Courses should deal more with current problems and use the insights and contributions of the attending ministers. The cultural advantages of the cities where Seminaries are located are of no small value to attending ministers. The question of financing attendance should be considered by the Denomination. Something should be done for the men in the lower salary brackets.

Suggestions: Perhaps more Seminaries could have some classes (one day a week) during the Winter term for men near enough to drive to the

school as some Seminaries are conducting today. The extension principle could be followed—a professor from the Seminary could travel to some distant center and the ministers in that vicinity come in for instruction. Seminary buildings might be used by the **Denomination in the Summer** for their own denominational schools.

3. Hugh Hartshorne discussed for the first time before a non-Baptist group his study of "Theological Education in the Northern Baptist Convention." He pointed out that while Congregationalists did not have the theological schisms which obtain in the Baptist denomination the general situation was probably quite similar. His conclusion is that the ministry can hardly be called a profession in the accepted sense and that theological training is not professional. The theological curriculum is more like a liberal arts course with some professional elements. It does not deal adequately with problem of human nature and its control. We do not have a body of principles on religious leadership such as we have on secular education. We do not provide types of experience through which a man can develop competence for religious leadership. Seminaries don't change the stereotype of the minister. They don't show what the church ought to be doing.

There was a general feeling that Hartshorne's sobering observations contained much truth. His suggested cure was that the Seminaries appoint committees to study the curricula and recommend needed changes. He believes much self education is now going on in the Seminaries. This process should be accelerated and apathy overcome. Other suggestions were: (a) Greater stress in the curriculum on the sociological structure of the church and its community. (b) The Seminary curriculum must be frankly professional and vocational in scope and method. This is to be distinguished from both "cultural" and "technical" stress by including both

focused on the ministry as a job and the church as a case study.

4. William A. Leath described the interesting "Ohio Plan" for dealing with the problems of our ministry. Ohio Conference has organized a state committee to parallel the National Department of the Ministry, composed of eight members, all active pastors. The committee believes that in emphasizing the work on the state level it will get greater interest and effectiveness. It is dealing with recruiting, placement, lay ministry for small churches, In-service training and standards of procedure for ordination. It has not developed new techniques but is pushing the recommendations of the National Department of the Ministry through their state organization.

It was felt that wide publicity should be given to the Ohio proposals so as to change the denominational mood from drift to initiative, responsibility and co-operation.

Specific features of the Ohio plan are:

- (a) Recruiting—Encouraging ministers to search out young people interested in religious work. Cultivating these through the state committee and Summer Conferences. Directing Pilgrim Fellowship program more in terms of recruiting. Preparation of literature on recruiting. Beginning work at the High School level.
- (b) Lay ministry—Securing leadership for small churches among teachers and other laymen. Setting up standards for lay ministry—with reexamination every two years. Dignifying this lay relationship with official standing.
- (c) In-service training — Stimulating better reading by ministers. Retreats and planning conferences on district basis. Want to use Seminaries in the state for conferences. Special Dennison Conference this Summer led by strong ministers of the State which they hope to

develop into a larger conference.

- (d) Ordination and placement—Trying to get uniformity in ordination practice. Strengthening of Association committees on ministerial standing. Aid to churches in process of calling a minister.

5. Arthur C. McGiffert and George R. Wells introduced the discussion of the "Status of Religious Education." The demand for Religious Education Directors will probably exceed supply for several years. The Director has never been given an adequate professional status by either churches or ministers. Seminaries should guide both Directors and Ministers in sympathy for each other's place in church life. Must train Directors for a difficult and ill-defined field.

But 98 per cent of churches can't afford Directors of Religious Education. Pastors must be trained in educational point of view. Minister is not only a moralist and exhorter.

Mr. Fagley believes we need a thorough going study of the educational responsibilities of the Christian pulpit. Pulpit needs to develop a long range educational program.

Summer schools like Sylvandale and Deering should stress the minister as educator—guide pastors as teachers and users of the educational method.

6. Ralph L. Woodward spoke briefly of the Church's interest in Seminary curricula. The Church usually shows interest in Seminary only when it has a minister who fails (then wants to know why he failed) or when it wants to call a minister who is just leaving the Seminary as a student. Is very hard to determine what churches want their ministers to have in the way of Seminary training. Churches frequently don't seem to know very clearly what they do want. Hartshorne's study of the Baptist churches throws some light here.

The Round Table closed with an expression of appreciation on the part of the members for the way the problem had been opened up. These problems lie at the very center of our church life. It was agreed that in such a group representing the Seminaries, the churches and the denomination there was reason to believe that progress would be made in the solution of our problems, and it was also agreed that this feature of the work of the Department of the ministry is worthy of full support.

The Round Table expressed to President Stafford and to the Hartford Seminary Foundation its hearty appreciation for the hospitable reception and gracious entertainment.

CLARENCE S. DUNHAM,
Recorder.

Inspirer—Schweitzer

Mark G. Inghram

Pastor, First Congregational Church, Union City, Michigan

I cannot think as I believe you thought:
I think you thought the Kingdom we
shall see
Would come at once apocalyptically;
So every word you said and deed you
wrought
Must be translated by the ends you sought.
Not so the Kingdom came; I cannot be
Apocalyptical consistently;
Yet I would share the love your fealty
brought.

I am disturbed by visions day and night
Of blacks beneath th' Equator and their
plight,
With none to help their ignorance, illth
and woe,
No Christian hand extended in their right.
Perhaps Bach can go with me—so or no,
For your sake, in your name, to them
I go.

Preaching—Plus the Printed Page

The Rev. John R. Scotford

Editor "Advance," New York

PROTESTANTISM is the wordiest of religious movements and the most vocal. It seeks to achieve the major part of its results through the voice of the preacher. Its techniques are excellent for the creation of moods and for certain types of emotoinal impact but they are not so effective when it comes to the detailed impartation of ideas and facts. The amount of time which a congregation is prepared to listen is terribly scant. The preacher suffers from two personal limitations. It is difficult for one man to know all that needs to be told to a congregation; he has his bright spots and his blind spots. Another fact which cannot be blinked is that after a group of people have accepted about so many ideas from one source that their ears grow heavy and their attention lags. No one man can communicate to a Protestant congregation all the truth that it needs to receive.

As a group we have been very slow to use the printed page as a supplement to the spoken word. Others have been far more alert. Christian Science, Unity, and Jehovah's Witnesses have used their periodicals as a substitute for preaching with startling effectiveness. The Roman Catholic Church is developing a system of local weekly papers which are models of popular religious journalism.

In re-appraising the place of the printed page in the Protestant scheme of things certain recent developments need to be taken into account. A superintendent of schools once remarked to the writer, "This is really our first literate generation"—which is the simple truth. Not only can more people read, but the younger generation is being trained to scan the printed page with both a speed and a comprehension which their elders lacked. *Time* confessed some months ago that its circulation is twice what it had estimated

to be the maximum number of readers who could be found for such a periodical. The monthly book clubs are booming, while publishing has entered upon an era of prosperity which exceeds the fondest hopes of the past.

More people are reading more millions of words than ever before. What does this mean for the church? Is religion merely to be lost in this deluge of other interests, or can these reading habits be so directed as to supplement and reinforce the work of the pulpit? We believe the latter is possible.

I

To do so the church needs to study the literary trends of the times. At the heyday of its popularity twenty odd years ago the *Saturday Evening Post* rarely allowed a simple thought to be expressed in less than 300 words. It nearly died of verbosity. Several editorial revolutions have kept it alive but it has never regained its old prestige. This is a negative example to be heeded. On the other hand, the three new periodicals which have arisen to positions of power each have a virtue which we might well emulate: in the *Readers' Digest* economy of words, in *Time* lucidity, in the *New Yorker* sparkle. These journalistic marvels point the pathway towards the future. Religious periodicals must compete with such publications for the attention of our church people. This is a fact which must be faced.

Our church people are willing to read both religious books and periodicals provided that these are inherently attractive and are presented to them in an effective way.

The vogue of the book-of-the-month clubs rests upon a quirk of human nature with which many ministers have been

familiar for years: thousands of people who will never voluntarily find their way to a book will gladly read one if it is handed to them by some one in whose judgment they have confidence. On this basis many a pastor has operated an informal but effective circulating library.

The same principle applies to the circulation of church periodicals. In this area the writer speaks out of his experience in promoting *Advance* during the past three years. Certain preconceived notions stand in the way of the enlistment of new readers: that the paper is intended primarily for ministers and aged saints; that to subscribe would be to nominate oneself for membership in the inner circle of well-seasoned Christians who stand at the center of most churches; that the paper, being religious, is therefore by definition antique and dull. These hurdles are not difficult to negotiate. We have avoided the ministerial in both phraseology and content, stressing the fact whenever possible that the paper is intended primarily for laymen. We have found that the easiest way to overcome the inhibition against taking a "religious" paper is to enlist new subscribers in sizable groups of from ten to fifty. This creates the inference that "everybody is doing it" and makes it seem the natural thing for the ordinary laymen. The use of larger and more modern type and the general "dressing up" of the paper has met with an astonishing response. People are a bit surprised but quite delighted to see an ancient religious periodical appearing in modern clothes. Getting—and holding—subscribers has proven far easier than we anticipated.

II

From the point of view of the minister there are many advantages in having a considerable group of people in the congregation who are reading religious books and periodicals. Their presence tends to

measurably lighten the load which he bears.

Religious reading on the part of the laity helps to build a bridge of understanding between the pulpit and the pew. Too often the minister and the congregation live in different worlds and speak in different tongues. Of course it should be the duty of the preacher to translate his message into terms which the common man can understand, but at the same time it is a comfort to the man behind the pulpit to have in front of him some people who know what he is aiming at and what his ultimate goals really are. Religious reading prepares the soil for the words of the minister.

The printed page can also reenforce the teachings of the preacher. Especially in the smaller churches, he appears to be speaking largely on his own responsibility. Often the setting discounts his words. Curiously, if the congregation has seen much the same thing in print, they will accept it with greater readiness. One of the practical effects of religious reading is to underscore the words of the minister.

Religious periodicals are an effective means for implanting new ideas of a practical nature in the mind of the congregation without visible effort on the part of the minister. If he is wise, he will avoid taking the onus for too many innovations. If his people "see it in the paper," they will appropriate new ideas as their own by right of discovery, often advocating changes which the minister might hesitate to suggest. In the administration of a church, this is the perfect strategy.

Never was it easier to get people to read than today. Never was reading more popular. By promoting the circulation of religious books and periodicals a minister can enrich and enlarge the total of instruction received by his people in such a way as to multiply his influence and strengthen his church.

Books, Men and Fishing

The Rev. Frederick H. Thompson

Easthampton Congregational Church, Easthampton, Mass.

THERE is always something of a deep note of welcome as you step into your study for the first time after a prolonged absence. It comes gently at first, like the introduction of one of Debussy's themes. One book brings it out and then another and another, until—as you stand back again in the midst of all these old companions or friendly acquaintances—you are filled with a sense of jubilation. As you look quickly around, from one case to another, that first quiet respectful note of welcome swells to a crescendo and you must go to this volume and that, pull it from its place and fondly rub your hand over its cover or quickly turn its leaves, while a thousand released thoughts come flying at you like sparks from a turning emery wheel.

The first elation of welcome having subsided, one quite naturally starts browsing. You can browse quite satisfactorily in a bookstore or in a library; but these are as nothing compared to browsing in your own study after three or four months' absence. Here you are king and master and no underling can ask you to move on for it is closing time or eye you disapprovingly as you indulge in open laughter. Some friendly enemy may hurl a robot bomb into your peaceful vale by clanging the telephone but this you can ignore. You are still "out of town."

In my particular case, being at heart a book collector rather than a scholar, and not having seen my treasures for some time, I suppose it was only natural for me to draw forth from its place one of my recent prizes which had taken on a new luster during recent months. It was Ernest Hemingway's "Three Stories and Ten Poems," with the Dijon imprint. The *Saturday Review of Literature* had polled Hemingway the leading American novelist over a period of two decades.

I was warm with pride that here in my hand was his first book. I leafed it through to the last poem "Chapter Heading" and read it again.

"For we have thought the longer thoughts
And gone the shorter way.
And we have danced to devil's tunes
Shivering home to pray;
To serve one master in the night,
Another in the day."

That was written away back there just after the first World War. It is still a "Chapter Heading" for us in these days of World War II. In fact it is the history of our times in miniature. From this suggestive beginning Hemingway has continued to write and create in that same tense and dramatic style which has made "Farewell to Arms" and "For Whom the Bell Tolls" two of America's great novels.

As I read Hemingway, or any other writer, who grips and holds me with his words and ideas, my mind invariably asks the question "Why can't theology be written in this same dramatic, lucid way?" "Why should the subject which needs the most light have to be so obscured by writers who seek to be torch bearers of the faith?" For example, there is Reinhold Niebuhr, our great modern theologian. What a vast distance separate this leader in theology, Niebuhr, from his contemporary and the acknowledged Titan of modern literature, Hemingway? If Niebuhr only had the clear and dramatic style which Hemingway possesses, and if Hemingway only had the sense of the Kingdom of God that Niebuhr possesses, here would be power.

In spite of his swashbuckling approach to life Hemingway is not anti-religious. He has been in and out of the Church from time to time. His grandfather was a well-known religious leader in England.

His mother is a devout Church member. I talked recently with one of a group of young Catholic laymen who were praying that he might find his way back to the Church. It worked with Heywood Broun. Why not Hemingway? Why not?

I moved to the next case and without knowing why picked out "The Complete Angler" by Izaak Walton in an early English edition. As I idly leafed through its pages, the idea burst upon me that Izaak Walton was the solution to the Hemingway, Niebuhr matter. Just get them together fishing and that's all. I would love to "hear" that pair fish. Could Niebuhr land him, I wondered? These professors are full of ideas and spend their lives telling others how to do it. Can they do it themselves? I used to know an old hymn "Out of the Ivory Palaces." We could change it a little for this occasion and call it "Out of the Ivory Towers." What a scene that would be? Ernest Hemingway and Reinhold Niebuhr fishing together. It would be somewhat of a different occasion than that which Hemingway so vividly describes in "The Sun Also Rises." Let us hope the fellowship would be as warm although supplied from a different source and the fishing as good. What kind of lures would Niebuhr use? Would his casts go sailing away over Hemingway's head (as some of them have over mine); or would they get a strike?

There ought to be a committee of the Federal Council that just arranges fishing trips for such men. John L. Lewis ought to be sent off to some well-stocked pool with a man of the caliber of the former Archbishop Temple. What a power for righteousness this leader of labor might become if he caught some of the social vision of a man like Temple.

You know I believe one thing the matter with us who are Protestants is that we have come to think of a conference as the only means of grace that God has provided for us. We conference everything. I believe Izaak Walton offers a far more delightful and resultful method

of doing the Lord's work. It's worth a try.

By the way, never try to just leaf through "The Angler" and hope to get away with it. Some books you can but not "The Angler." From my standing position I was soon settled in my reading chair absorbed in how to catch a trout. Here is one brief section.

"Piscator. Well, Scholar, now we are sat down and are at ease I shall tell you a little more of Trout-fishing, before I speak of Salmons, which I purpose shall be next and then of the Pike or Luce.

"You are to know there is night as well as day fishing for a Trout and that, in the night, the best Trouts come out of their holes and the manner of taking them is on the top of the water with a great lob or garden worm or rather two, which you are to fish with in a place where the waters run somewhat quietly, for in a stream the bait will not be so well discerned. I say in a quiet or dead place near to some swift, then draw your bait over the top of the water to and fro and if there be a good trout he will take it, especially if the night be dark."

And so I was led on and on. It was the midnight booming of the town clock that made me realize what a saboteur old Izaak Walton had been. There was a whole evening completely gone. Work long piled up needed to be done and there I sat. But I could not be too provoked. I had liked it. Fishing either in books or streams has a power and fascination which is hard to throw off. Yes, I thought, as I got up to get ready for bed, I must write to the Federal Council about organizing that Fishers of Men Department. And I have a text. The same one Izaak Walton used on the frontispiece of his work; "Simon Peter said, 'I go a fishing' and they said, 'We also will go with thee.'" John 21-3. And they fished in the sea of Galilee. But remember they did not stop at that. They went to Jerusalem and fished for men and got them. The thing all followers of Izaak Walton should remember is that the Christian Church was started by fishermen.

Pastoral Epistle IV

Concerning the Easter Congregation

Dear Fellow Pontificaters:

The Easter Congregation is always an inspiring sight; every pew filled with attendants if not with worshipers. Regular church goers and experienced Pastors may not be too much impressed, but any way one looks at the crowded sanctuary it is an inspiring spectacle and a demonstration of the nascent Protestantism of any community. How many Pastors, we wonder, are unable to resist the temptation to take a sly dig at the "regular attendants" who come to church once a year at Easter? Though their comments are usually couched in a jocular vein there is apt to be an underlying note of bitterness and resentment in such remarks. We can't blame the ministers when one thinks of the empty pews which they face so often on other Sunday mornings throughout the year.

But is this practice a good one? That question came to me when we returned from our Easter Service this year. One of the family had stayed at home to prepare dinner. She said that she had tuned in on the Service of one of the city churches, whose minister she liked, hoping thereby to catch some of the Easter Spirit as she went about her household duties. This was what she said, "I turned off the radio, when he started off on the old line about those who come to church regularly once a year at Easter." There is something in her remark for us min-

isters to ponder. Perhaps there were people in that Congregation who felt the same reaction as this one who stayed at home. They couldn't turn off their radios, but they could close their minds because they resented the personal implications of the preacher's remarks. After that they were no longer with him. One may be quite sure that it did not cause any of them to repent of their past neglect; on the contrary they were probably more deeply confirmed in it.

Whatever may be the motives which lead people to come to the Easter Service, at least they are there; exposed to the flowers, the music, the prayers and the sermon. Their presence gives to the preacher his great opportunity to voice once again the great affirmations of Easter; to proclaim in no uncertain terms that "Life is ever Lord of Death, and Love can never lose its own." It may be after all that this is what the people come to hear! At all events isn't it better to act on the assumption that they do?

It would be a good idea if we should all resolve never again to be guilty of the poor taste, to say nothing of the worse tactics, of sounding this false note in the harmony of our Easter Worship.

Yours for a Happy Easter next year,

HORACE F. HOLTON

14 Beacon Street
Boston, Mass.